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First Wind of Islamic Revivalism after World War II: Muhammad Asad (1900-92) and International Islamic Colloquium, 1957-58

Zahid Munir Amir*

It has happened several times in the history of Islam that its opponents turned into its greatest defenders. Muhammad Asad was also one amongst them. This paper deals with the contribution of Muhammad Asad in international Islamic Colloquium held in Lahore, Pakistan, from 29 December 1957 to 8 January 1958, which can be considered the first International activity on Islamization after World War II. In spite of Mr. Asad's notable contribution to this colloquium, his name has never been mentioned in this context. This paper discovers some official documents regarding his role in this perspective. Mr. Asad's contribution in establishing a new department of Islamic Studies in the oldest seat of learning in South Asia i.e. University of the Punjab is also discussed at length.

Muhammad Asad was born in a Polish family at Limburg (present day Ukraine), on 2 July 1900. His original name was Leopold Weiss. He learnt the Jewish Holy Scriptures and the Hebrew language at an early age. His family shifted to Vienna in 1914 where he continued his learning. In 1918, he joined the Austrian army. He studied philosophy, history, art, physics and chemistry from the Vienna University. In 1922, he traveled to the Middle East for the first time and visited Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syria and Turkey. During his second travel in 1924, he went to Egypt, Amman, Tripoli, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and the Central Asia. After long experience, deep observation and extensive study, he embraced Islam in 1926 at Berlin and adopted Muhammad Asad as his Islamic name. He performed Hajj, got married at Cairo and started writing in prominent international newspapers. He came to India in 1932 and stayed at Amritsar, Lahore, Srinagar, Delhi, and Hyderabad Deccan. He also met poet philosopher of Islam Dr. Sir Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) who wished that he should teach Islamic Studies to the young generation at Islamia College Lahore. Iqbal has discussed Muhammad Asad in various letters written to Syed Nazeer Niazi in 1934.¹ Muhammad Asad's book *Islam at the Cross Roads* was published the same year.² Iqbal commented about this book in the following words:

*"This work is extremely interesting. I have no doubt that coming as it does from a highly cultured European convert to Islam it will prove an eye-opener to our younger generation."*³

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1 See Iqbal's letters written on June 27 1934, July 23 1934, July 28 1934, July 30 1934, August 11 1934, and October 31, 1934 included in *Kulliyat e Makateeb e Iqbal*, edited by S. Muzaffar Hussain Barni, Delhi: Urdu Academy 1993 Vol. 3, pp. 529 and onward.

2 Muhammad Asad *Islam at the Crossroad*, Lahore: Arafat Publications, 1934.

3 *Ibid.* (some press opinions).

He started work on translation and commentary of the *Sahi Bukhari* in 1935 and published its five volumes. In January 1937⁴ he was appointed editor of a journal named *Islamic Culture* which appeared from Hyderabad Deccan. He remained editor of this journal till 1938. He was imprisoned by the British government during the Second World War (1 September 1939–14 August 1945). After facing prolonged hardships, he got released and started a monthly magazine *Arafaat* in 1946. After creation of Pakistan in 1947, he came to Lahore from Dalhousie and settled at the Model Town. Pakistan's establishment was fulfillment of Muhammad Asad's dreams. He wrote in this regard:

*“For which I myself had worked and striven since 1933”*⁵

He was appointed as Director of the Department of Islamic Reconstruction. He also served as Deputy Secretary and In charge of the Middle East Division in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was the first person to get a Pakistani passport. He represented Pakistan in the United Nations. He went to Saudi Arabia as Pakistan's delegate in 1951. He was appointed Pakistan's representative to the United Nations in 1952. He served as Chairman to the Committee on Information from Non-Self Government Territories and member of the Disarmament Commission of the Security Council. In 1954 his famous book *The Road to Mecca* was published.⁶ After his resignation as Pakistan's representative to the United Nations, he visited Switzerland, Beirut, Sharjah and Lebanon. In 1961 his book *The Principles of State and Government in Islam*⁷ was published. He settled at Morocco in 1964 where he lived till 1981. His book on Quran's translation and commentaries entitled *The Message of Quran*⁸ was published in 1980. He was again invited to Pakistan in 1983 by the military ruler Gen Zia ul Haq government for advice on promulgation of Islam. He participated in the meeting of the *Ansari Commission*. This proved to be the last journey of this loyal Pakistani and holder of the first Pakistani passport. His last book *This Law of Ours and Other Essays*⁹ was published in 1987. He went to London from Pakistan on 3 August 1983 and then to Portugal. He traveled to Spain in 1987 where he died on 20 February 1992. He was buried in the Muslim graveyard of Granada.

As evident from the foregoing discussion, our beloved country benefited from his

4 Muhammad Asad (Translated from the Arabic with explanatory notes) *Sahih al-Bukhari* (Being traditions of the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH/ narrated by his companions to those who followed them / and compiled under the title *Kitab al-Jami as-Sahih* by Imam Abu Abd Allah Muhammad Ibn Ismail al-Bukhari) in 7 volumes about 40 instalments, Lahore: Arafat Publications.

5 Muhammad Asad (Translated and Explained) *Sahih al-Bukhari: The Early Years of Islam*, Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1981 (Preface).

6 New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954.

7 Berkeley California: University of California Press, 1961.

8 Mecca: Muslim World League.

9 Gibraltar: Dar al-Andalus, 1987.

services as a famous international intellectual and expert of Islamic studies. Punjab University which is the oldest university of the country also created opportunities to benefit from his vast knowledge. There is a dearth of information about Muhammad Asad in the research work conducted on him so far. His first biography, *Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Asad*,¹⁰ was written in German language. As this book dealt with events till 1927, there was no possibility of mentioning Pakistan or the Punjab University. *The Truth Society* has published two huge volumes on Muhammad Asad's life and the articles written on him.¹¹ This collection of more than one thousand pages which discusses most aspects of Muhammad Asad's life, like Iqbal and Asad, Iqbal and the Khairi Brothers etc., hardly contains any information about this aspect of Muhammad Asad's life. A *PhD* thesis on Muhammad Asad's thought has also been written. This thesis too, like *Europe's Gift to Islam*, discusses nothing about Muhammad Asad and the Punjab University apart from briefly describing his appointment in the Islamic Colloquium.¹² Recently appeared, second part of his autobiography captioned *Homecoming of the Heart* also contains nothing on the issue.¹³ Edited and annotated Urdu translation of this book is also appeared but the situation is not different.¹⁴

In this article, three aspects of Muhammad Asad's relation with the Punjab University will be discussed; the first two aspects are being highlighted for the first time.

In this regard, help has been taken for the first time from Muhammad Asad's own letters and record of the Punjab University. All his letters being reproduced in this article are, hitherto, unpublished.

(1)

After establishment of Pakistan, the measures taken in connection with the Islamic identity of the new country also included establishment of an Islamic Studies Department in the oldest university of the country, i.e, University of the Punjab.¹⁵ University of the Punjab had started functioning as a unit in 1882. However, it had no department for the Islamic studies. In view of this fact and the requirements of the new country, the Syndicate of the university decided to establish an Islamic Studies Department in its meeting held on 5 February 1949.

10 Günther Windhager, *Leopold Weiss alias Muhammad Asad Von Galizien nach Arabien 1900–1927*, Böhalu Wien

11 M. Ikram Chughtai (ed.) *Muhammad Asad Europe's Gift to Islam*, Lahore: The Truth Society and Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006, vol. I & II, pp. 1240

12 Muhammad Arshad, *Islami Riyasat Ki Tashkeel e Jadeed ... Muhammad Asad Ke Afakar ka Tanqeedi Mutalia*, Department of Islamic Studies University of the Punjab Lahore, April 2007. Recently this dissertation has been published from Al Faisal Publishers, Urdu Bazar, Lahore.

13 Muhammad Asad & Pola Hamida Asad, *Homecoming of the Heart (1932–1992)*, Edited and annotated by M. Ikram Chughtai, Lahore: The Truth Society, 2012.

14 M. Ikram Chughtai (Tr.), *Muhammad Asad Banda e Sahrae*.

15 Proceedings of Meeting of the Syndicate of the University of the Punjab, dated the 5-02-1949 paragraph 16, No. 1834/GM dated 19-02-1949, Lahore: The Truth Society, 2009

When new departments are established in universities only those scholars are selected to head the departments who acquire zenith of excellence in that particular field. Muhammad Asad remained seriously associated with Islamic learning after embracing Islam in 1926. He had gained such excellence in this field that after establishment of Islamic Studies Department in the University of the Punjab, the authorities considered him the best man for heading the department. In the meeting of the Syndicate, University of the Punjab, held on 5 February 1949, which has already been referred in the preceding discussion, the Vice Chancellor recommended Muhammad Asad's name to head the Department of Islamic Studies. At that time Dr. Umar Hayat Malik was Vice Chancellor of the University of the Punjab, who served on this position from September 1947 to September 1950. The University informed Muhammad Asad about this offer through a letter. The information was delivered by Captain Muhammad Basheer, Registrar of the University by letter no. 1243/GM, dated 8 February 1949. Text of the letter sent by the Registrar was as under:

To

Allama M. Asad

Director Department of Islamic

Reconstruction, West Punjab, Lahore.

Sir,

I have the honour to inform you that the Syndicate has appointed you as an honorary head of the department of the Islamiyyat of this University. Kindly acknowledge.

I have etc. etc.

Signed

Deputy Registrar (Admin).

for Registrar

Muhammad Asad accepted the offer upon receiving this letter. He acknowledged the Registrar's letter and thanked the University. Muhammad Asad wrote the letter in this regard on 8 February 1949. The text of his letter was as under:

Lahore. February 12, 1949

Captain M. Bashir, B.Sc.Hons. (Edin)

Registrar, University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Dear Sir

I thank you for your letter No. 1243/LM dated the 3rd February, 1949, informing me that the Syndicate has appointed me as honorary Head of the Department of Islamiyyat of the University, for which honour I am grateful.

*Yours truly,
Signed
(M. ASAD)*

Decisions made by the University Syndicate are approved by the Senate. The decision of appointing Muhammad Asad as honorary Head of the Department of Islamic Studies was presented before the Senate in its meeting held on 29 March 1949. The Senate approved the decision. Minutes of the Senate meeting are reproduced below:

University of the Punjab.

The Senate at its meeting held on 29th March, 1949, has approved the following items: -

15. That the recommendations of the Syndicate relating to the appointment of the following persons in the various University Teaching Departments be approved (Vide paragraphs 16 and 2, 3, 32 and 38 of the Syndicate Proceedings, dated the 5th and 11th February, 1949, respectively): -

1. Allama Muhammad Asad, as Honorary Head of the Department of Islamiyat.

Copy of the above forwarded for information and necessary action to:

The A.R.A. and D.R.A./H.A.A./Asstt. Misc/Mr. Hassan Din with files to inform the persons concerned and Head of the Teaching Departments.¹⁶

However, after eleven months of his appointment, Muhammad Asad presented his resignation. In a letter to the Vice Chancellor, he quoted his busy schedule as the reason for his resignation owing to which he could not pay proper attention to his duties as the Honorary Head of the Department of Islamic Studies. He, therefore, requested for immediate acceptance of his resignation. Muhammad Asad was not sure whether the Vice-Chancellor was in Lahore or not. Therefore, he sent his resignation in a covering letter to the Registrar. He also wrote in his covering letter that he was returning the related files of the Department to the Deputy Registrar of Administration. The text of the letter written to the Registrar Captain Muhammad Bashir was as under:

3 Chamba House Lane.

Lahore, January 24, 1950

My dear Capt. Bashir,

As I am not sure whether the Vice-Chancellor is at present in Lahore. I am sending my resignation from the post of Honorary Head of the Dept. of Islamiyyat to you, with the request to place it before him at the earliest opportunity. The files in my possession relating to this

¹⁶ Proceedings of the meeting of the Senate University of the Punjab held on March 29, 1949 .

Department are being returned to the Deputy Registrar (Adm.).

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,

Signature

(M. ASAD)

Capt. M. Bashir, M.Sc.(Edin),

Registrar

University of the Punjab,

LAHORE.

The resignation sent along with the covering letter was as under:

The Vice-Chancellor,

Punjab university, Lahore.

Dear Sir,

Owing to my pre-occupations I am not in a position to do justice to my office as Honorary Head of the Department of Islamiyyat, Punjab university, and request you therefore kindly to accept my resignation from this office with immediate effects.

Yours truly,

Signature

(M. ASAD)

The resignation letter was shown to the Vice Chancellor who signed it on 25 January 1950 and forwarded it for information of the Syndicate. The following office note was prepared for the purpose:

Office Note

Subject: Resignation of Allama Mohammad Asad as Honorary Head of the Department of Islamiyyat.

At the time of creation of Islamiyyat as a subject for various University Examinations, Allama M. Asad was appointed as Honorary Head of the Department of Islamiyyat. The Allama has tendered his resignation on the grounds that owing to his pre-occupations he is not in a position to do justice to his office, and requests that his resignation be accepted with immediate effect.

The Syndicate may accept his resignation and appoint a substitute in his place.

In accordance with the procedure, the resignation was presented in the Syndicate

meeting. After Syndicate approval the matter was brought to the Senate. The Senate, in its meeting held on 30 March 1950 approved the recommendation of the Syndicate regarding the resignation of Allama Asad. The minutes of the Senate meeting stated:

That the recommendations of the Syndicate relating to the acceptance of the resignation of the following person be approved (vide paragraph 7 and 15, 17 and 20 of the Syndicate proceedings dated 6th February 1950 and 7th March 1950 respectively)

4. Allama Muhammad Asad, as honorary head of the department of Islamiyyat.¹⁷

After resignation of Muhammad Asad, the position of Honorary Head of the Department of Islamic Studies was offered to Allama Alla ud Din Siddiqi (3 November 1907–27 December 1977). He accepted the offer and thus became the second head of the Department of Islamic Studies, Punjab University. Muhammad Asad's resignation was presented in the Syndicate meeting held on 7 March 1950. Muhammad Alla ud Din Siddiqi was appointed as the Honorary Head of the Department of Islamic Studies in the same meeting. This appointment was made, till selection of a permanent person for the post, at the salary of Rs. 500 a month.¹⁸ He was informed about this appointment by the Assistant Registrar General through a letter written on 27 March 1950. This clarification confirms that Allama Alla ud Din Siddiqi was not the first Head of the Department of Islamic Studies as written by some people.¹⁹

(2)

Apparently, Muhammad Asad's association with the Punjab University ended after this resignation. However, it was not the reality. The university remained eager for Muhammad Asad's association with it in any form. Vice Chancellor of the Punjab University Dr. Umar Hayat Malik (1892–1982) was also one of the admirers of Muhammad Asad. He was appointed as Vice chancellor of the Punjab University in 1947 and held this position till June 1950. He, along with Maulvi Tamiz Ud Din Khan, the Speaker of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, organized the all Pakistan Political Science Conference from 5 to 7 March 1950 for giving shape to an Islamic constitution. The first meeting of this conference was held on the topic of Muslim doctrine of rule and politics. Muhammad Asad presided

17 Proceedings Meeting of Senate March 30, 1950 Para No. 12

18 Proceedings of Meeting of the Syndicate of the University of the Punjab, dated the 7-03-1950 paragraph 15, No. 15 after considering item no. 24 on the deferred agenda, it was decided to accept the resignation of Allama Muhammad Asad and to appoint Mr. Ala-ud-Din Siddiqi as honorary head of the Department of Islamiyyat in his place.

19 For example see *Muraqqa e Siddiqi* ed. by Dr. Jamila Shaukat, Lahore: Majlis e Fazileen e Uloom e Islamia ,University of the Punjab, 2003, pp. 14, 79, 185.

over the meeting.²⁰ Afterwards, Muhammad Asad came into contact with the university, at least twice. German and French languages were being taught at the Oriental College, Punjab University along with Oriental Language. After establishment of Pakistan, Spanish and Russian languages were also added to the list. Gradually, teaching of Turkish and Japanese also started. So much so that an eight member commission under the chairmanship of Chief Justice Abdul Rasheed recommended establishment of a language unit and that it should be developed as college of oriental and western languages.²¹ After independence, Dr. Barkat Ali Qureshi used to teach German language. Dr. Qureshi was basically working as professor of Arabic. He had joined the Oriental College in 1942 and became principal of the college in May 1948 after the death of Professor Dr. Sheikh Muhammad Iqbal. Dr. Barkat was appointed as ambassador in February 1950. He served as Pakistan's ambassador in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan.²² He returned in June 1951 and resumed his duties as professor of Arabic and principal of Oriental College. Dr. Qureshi had been studying in Germany. He had received a *PhD* degree from Berlin University in 1928. He also had command over German language. Therefore, he also used to teach German language at the Oriental College. This teaching process got disturbed due to his appointment as ambassador in February 1950. He had started the language teaching course on 17 October 1949. In this class of an initial level, 20 students were participating. Only three months had passed since initiation of these classes when he had to proceed on leave in 1950. Despite the fact that only two months had lapsed since the episode of Muhammad Asad's resignation as head of Islamic Studies Department, the university invited Muhammad Asad again in order to keep the German language teaching in operation. Muhammad Asad possessed equal command over Arabic, Persian, French, Spanish Portuguese and Urdu.²³ He had mastered English, Dutch and Hebrew languages as well. He was requested to deliver four lectures of German language on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. He was offered 200 Rupees per month for the service. The offer letter was sent by the Deputy Registrar of Administration on behalf of the Registrar which read as follows:

No 1064 G

March 20, 1950

Allama M. Asad,

3 - Chamba House Lane,

20 All Pakistan Political Science Association Proceedings of the First All Pakistan Political Science Conference 1950 (Lahore: The Punjab University Press, 1950) cf. Muhammad Arshad, p. 125.

21 Dr. Ghulam Hussain Zulfiqar, *Sad Sala Tareekh e Jamia Punjab*, Lahore: University of the Punjab 1982, p. 261.

22 Dr. Ghulam Hussain Zulfiqar, *Tareekh e University Oriental College*, Lahore: University Oriental College, 1962, p. 187.

23 Murad Wilfried Hofmann meeting Muhammad Asad (Lisbon 21 September 1985) included in *Muhammad Asad Europe's Gift to Islam* edited by M. Ikram Chughtai, Lahore: The Truth Society and Sang-e-Meel Publications, 2006, vol. II p. 1142.

Golf Road, Lahore.

Sir,

I have been directed by the Vice-Chancellor to enquire if you would be willing to take German Classes. At the present moment there is only one elementary class consisting of 20 students. The Course was started by Principal B.A. Kuraishi on the 17th October, 1949 and no instruction has been imparted after the 1st February, 1950. The lecturer would be expected to take four periods a week i.e. on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. The remuneration offered by the University is Rs. 200/- p.m.

An early reply is requested.

I have etc.,

Signed
Deputy Registrar (Admn.),
for Registrar.

It appears that Muhammad Asad considered this offer very seriously. He was going to Karachi when he received this letter. Therefore, he thought it best to only acknowledge the letter instead of giving a final reply. He wrote that he would be in a better position to respond after returning from Karachi. He also expressed the hope of meeting the Vice Chancellor (Dr. Umar Hayat Malik) in Karachi. And that he would discuss the matter with him if he met him. This letter from Muhammad Asad to the Registrar was written on 22 March 1950 from the Chamba House Lahore. Text of the letter is reproduced as under:

Deputy Registrar (Adm.),

Punjab university,

Lahore.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your letter No. 1064/G, dated the 20th instant, I have to inform you that I am leaving for Karachi tomorrow morning, and cannot, therefore, give you a final reply regarding the matter under consideration. I shall be, however, back in Lahore within a week or so, and shall contact you then. In Karachi I hope also to meet the Vice-Chancellor and to discuss the matter with him as well.

Yours truly,
Signed
(M.ASAD)

What was the reply written by Muhammad Asad after his return from Karachi — whether he met the Vice Chancellor in Karachi or not — no information is available

about these questions. However, teaching of the German language continued afterwards. Dr. Qureshi returned the next year and taught till his retirement in 1954. The teachers who taught the German language classes after his retirement included Dr. Basharat Ali (1954–1955), Dr. Brown (1955–1960), Dr. Peter (1960–1961), and Mrs. Ursula Ganetzky.²⁴

(3)

Muhammad Asad's last engagement with the Punjab University was in connection with the International Islamic Colloquium. This Colloquium was the first major international activity of the university after the establishment of Pakistan. The move was initiated by Pakistan's ambassador in the USA Syed Amjad Ali. He was a federal finance minister at that time. Funds for this Colloquium were provided by the government of Pakistan. The grant was released in two installments of fifty thousand and three *lakh* respectively.²⁵ Intellectuals and scholars from forty countries of the Muslim world participated in the Colloquium. They presented their papers on religion and culture. This was the second international Colloquium of its kind. The first Colloquium was organized in America by the Library of Congress and the Preston University in 1953. A Colloquium Committee was established for the purpose with representatives from six universities of the country. The committee invited suggestions from various circles and recommended following nine topics for discussion in the Colloquium:

- I. Islamic Culture: What do we mean by it?
- II. The Islamic Concept of State.
- III. The Challenges of Modern Ideas and Social Values to Muslim Society.
- IV. The Role of *Ijtihad* and the Scope of Legislation in Islam.
- V. The Attitude of Islam towards Science.
- VI. Islam's Influence on Western History and Culture.
- VII. Economics in the Social Structure of Islam with Special Consideration of Landed Property and Land Tenure.
- VIII. Islam's Attitude towards, and Relation with, Other Faiths.
- IX. Islam's Potential Contribution to World Peace.²⁶

Muhammad Asad was invited for organizing this extremely important Colloquium. He accepted the offer. It is evident from the minutes of the Chancellors Committee of the Punjab University that Muhammad Asad took over the position of Colloquium's Director on 1 March 1957. The following conditions were settled for this position:

²⁴ *Tareekh e University Oriental College*, pp. 228–229.

²⁵ *Sad Sala Tareekh e Jamia Punjab*, p. 290.

²⁶ Alauddin Siddiqui, Foreword *International Islamic Colloquium Papers December 29, 1957–January 8, 1958*, Lahore: Punjab University Press, 1960, p. VII.

(A) He would be paid a consolidated sum of Rs. 2500 p.m for the period he would act as Director.

(B) He would be entitled to get return passage from Bandoum to Lahore in respect of himself and his wife.²⁷

He was , later on , granted financial powers equivalent to those of a head of department. It was written in the minutes of the Chancellors Committee meeting held on 30 March 1957 that:

The honorary treasurer had recommended that Mr. Muhammad Asad who had been appointed Project Officer of the International Islamic Colloquium be delegated the same financial power as were exercised by Heads of the University Departments.²⁸

Muhammad Asad had requested to The Vice Chancellor that his wife Paula Hameed might be permitted to work as his secretary. Therefore, the Chancellors Committee, on recommendations of the Vice Chancellor, approved following matters in its meeting of 20 April 1957:

(2) Mr. Muhammad Asad the Project Officer be designated as Director of Colloquium.

(3) Mrs. Pola Hamida Asad's offer to act as Secretary in an honorary capacity be accepted with thanks.²⁹

Muhammad Asad was called from Beirut for arrangements of this Colloquium. He required funds for the transfer of his belongings from Beirut to Karachi and vice versa. He, therefore, requested the University for an Advance Payment of one thousand rupees to be returned in installments later on.

The Vice Chancellor approved this request as a special case before the Chancellors Committee meeting. It was settled that the amount would be returned in monthly installment of rupees two hundred each. The Resident Auditor opined that the amount should be returned in three installments. Vice chancellor's action was ultimately approved. It was, however, decided that if Muhammad Asad completed his assignment before payment of all installments, the remaining amount would be deducted from his last salary. Following is an extract from the minutes of the Chancellors Committee meeting:

Audit objection in regard to the number of installments for recovering the amount

27 Proceedings of the Chancellor's Committee, University of the Punjab, Lahore dated 25th January 1958.

28 Proceedings of the Chancellor's Committee, University of the Punjab, Lahore dated 30th March 1957.

29 Proceedings of the Chancellor's Committee, University of the Punjab, Lahore dated 20th April 1957.

advanced to Mr. M. Asad for transportation of his house-hold belongings.

Mr. M. Asad, Director, International Islamic Colloquium, had requested for an advance of one month's salary to enable him to meet expenses in connection with the shipment and transportation charges of his household belongings from Beirut to Karachi, and Karachi to Lahore. The Vice-Chancellor, in anticipation of the approval of the Chancellor's Committee, sanctioned the advance as a special case. The recovery of the amount was to be made at the rate of Rs. 200 per mensem. The Resident Senior Auditor while allowing the payment to be made provisionally desired that the sanction of the Chancellor's Committee should be obtained and that the recovery be made in three installments.

After discussion, resolved to confirm the action taken by the Vice-Chancellor and to permit Mr. Asad to repay the loan at the rate of Rs. 200 per mensem and in case his assignment ended prior to the adjustment of the amount the entire balance to be recovered from his last month's pay.³⁰

After settlement of all matters and conditions, Muhammad Asad started work for the Islamic Colloquium with devotion and concentration. Pakistan was a new country and international scholars were being invited by the Punjab University for the first time. With the help of his connections, Muhammad Asad contacted scholars of various Islamic countries, persuaded them for participation and got the papers written from them for the Colloquium. According to the *Hundred Years History of the Punjab University*, Muhammad Asad played pivotal role in organizing the Colloquium.³¹ Unfortunately, however, Muhammad Asad had to disengage himself from the Colloquium after completing all the arrangements. After him, Dr. Maulvi Muhammad Shafi was appointed Director of the Colloquium. Muhammad Alla Ud Din Siddiqi (Head of Department of Islamic Studies Department) and Captain Muhammad Basher (Registrar) were appointed as Joint Directors of the Colloquium. Sheikh Imtiaz Ali (Principal University Law College) and Muhammad Afzal (Secretary Secondary Board) were designated as Secretaries to the Colloquium.

There are two different opinions about Muhammad Asad's severance from the Colloquium. According to first view, Muhammad Asad had some grievances against the university. According to the second opinion Muhammad Asad's differences with the Vice Chancellor culminated in his separation from the Colloquium. The first view has been expressed in an editorial of the magazine *Tarjuman al-Quran* which was written after launch of the Colloquium. The editorial expressed detailed views about the Colloquium and wrote:

³⁰ Proceedings of the Chancellor's Committee, University of the Punjab, Lahore dated 30th November 1957.

³¹ *Sad Sala Tareekh e Jamia Punjab*, p. 290.

*“..... after going through theses translations Allama Asad’s complaints seem genuine and these people could not maintain the standard which was required by the Seminar, and assurance to which was given repeatedly to Allam Asad at the time of accepting his resignation..... .”*³²

This extract shows that Muhammad Asad’s differences were related to publication of the papers presented in the Islamic Colloquium. According to some sources he wanted to publish English translations of the Arabic papers and Arabic translations of the English papers. Muhammad Asad’s biographer Muhammad Arshad has written:

*“Allama Asad resigned due to his differences with the Vice Chancellor over hiring of translators for Arabic and Urdu translations of the English papers and English translations of the Arabic papers”*³³

However, the second part of the editorial of *Tarjuman al-Quran* is still not clear which discusses assurance, regarding quality of the translations, given repeatedly to Muhammad Asad at the time of accepting his resignation. The editorial does not specify who had given the assurance and to whom. If he was resigning due to differences, what kind of assurance could be given to him in those circumstances? Another point of view is that the Vice Chancellor was worried about the arrangements of the Colloquium. Only a month had left from the commencement of the Colloquium when he called Muhammad Asad and asked him to explain the state of arrangements. This discussion turned into exchange of hot words and Muhammad Asad immediately presented his resignation. When I (the writer of this article) asked from Sheikh Imtiaz Ali, Former Law Minister and Vice Chancellor of the University, the then associated with M Asad, about reasons of Muhammad Asad’s resignation , the latter told that:

*“Scholars had been invited from all over the world and there was only one hotel of international standard available in Lahore i.e, the Flaties. There was tremendous pressure on the administration regarding security and stay of the guests. The Vice Chancellor was worried due to the situation. He expressed his dissatisfaction to Allama Asad one month prior to the Colloquium. Perhaps he termed him as lazy. This angered Allama Asad and he immediately resigned.”*³⁴

32 Isharat Monthly *Tarjuman al-Quran* editor S. Abul Ala Maudoodi, Lahore: Office of the monthly *Tarjuman al-Quran* Jamadi al-Aakhir, 1377 AH, Vol. 49 No. 4, p. 11.

33 Muhammad Arshad *op-cit*.

34 Telephonic Conversation of the writer with Sheikh Imtiaz Ali on June 19, 2007.

A former education minister Dr. Muhammad Afzal who was associated with the Punjab University at that time, expressed the opinion that Muhammad Asad “*could not take full interest in the affairs of the Conference.*”³⁵ The Vice Chancellor Mian Afzal Hussain “*demanding early completion of work which resulted in argumentation.*”³⁶

However, comments of the newspapers and magazines after conclusion of the colloquium reflected some other reasons for resignation of Muhammad Asad. According to *Tarjuman al-Quran*, Muhammad Asad had some grievances and the causes of resignation were not simply the administrative matters. The opinions of Sheikh Imtiaz Ali and Dr. Afzal indicate that the Vice Chancellor had some complaints too.

Whatever the reasons, Muhammad Asad presented his resignation from the position of Director International Islamic Colloquium on 2 December 1957. The University now owed some arrears to him. Therefore, Muhammad Asad demanded payment of three thousand seven hundred and fifty five rupees so that he could travel back along with his wife. His demand was considered in the Chancellors Committee meeting held on 25 January 1957. The Treasurer took the view that the contract employees were entitled to get return ticket only in case of completion of their contract period. As Muhammad Asad had resigned before completion of his assignment, and he also had not rendered one month’s notice in advance, therefore, he and his wife were not entitled to get a return ticket. The Committee was told about Muhammad Asad’s request to relax the condition of one month’s advance notice. After a long discussion on the issue, the Committee decided to terminate the condition of one month’s advance notice and also decided to make the required payment to Muhammad Asad. Treasurer’s point of view was recorded in the minutes of the Chancellors Committee meeting in the following words:

*“All temporary employees were required to give one month’s notice if they resigned. Mr. Asad did not give the required notice. He had however requested that the condition of the notice be waived as a special case and that he be paid a sum of Rs. 3755 to cover his traveling expenses as well as those of his wife from Lahore to Bandoun, including incidental charges. The Treasurer was of the view that the payment of return fair for Mr. Asad and his wife could only have been admissible if the return journey would be under taken by Mr. Asad on the expiry of his period of his appointment”*³⁷

The decision made after a long discussion had the following words:

35 Baidar Malik (ed.), *Yaaran e Maktab* Hasool e Pakistan ki Jiddo jehd Aini Shahadtain. Memoirs of Dr. M Afzal, Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre, University of the Punjab, 1992, Vol. 2, pp. 213–214.

36 *Op-Cit.*

37 Proceedings of the Chancellor’s Committee, University of the Punjab, Lahore dated 25th January 1958.

*“After some discussion, resolved that the condition of one month’s notice be waived and that Mr. Asad be paid the same amount as was paid to him for the inward journey”*³⁸

This experience resulted in permanent disengagement of Muhammad Asad with the Punjab University. The Government, later on, offered him the Chairmanship of the Institute of Islamic Culture. However, he refused to accept the offer.

After his resignation, the International Islamic Colloquium was held in Lahore according to the schedule from 29 December 1957 to 8 January 1958. The collection of the papers presented in the Colloquium was published under the title of *Islamic Colloquium Papers*³⁹ However; this book contained no mention of Muhammad Asad.

38 *Op-Cit.*

39 See Reference 26.